

Message Text

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16

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 AID-20 DODE-00 PM-09 IGA-02 MC-02

L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 OMB-01 COME-00

TRSE-00 RSR-01 /072 W
----- 032605

R 110640 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0914
INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 2655

E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: EAID MASS PN
SUBJECT: PROPOSED TRANSFER USG HELICOPTERS TO PNG MISSIONARY
GROUP

REF: AID LSB NCAD PA 09 15 30 Z

1. EMBASSY WAS REQUESTED (REFTEL) BY NEW CUMBERLAND ARMY
DEPOT, PENNSYLVANIA (NCAD) TO CERTIFY VARIOUS FACTS RELATED
TO PROPOSED TRANSFER OF SIX USG EXCESS PROPERTY HELICOPTERS
TO SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS (SIL) IN PAPUA NEW
GUINEA. APPARENTLY NEITHER DEPARTMENT NOR AID HAVE BEEN INFORMED
OF THIS QUERY. EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT RELAY FOLLOWING REPLY
TO NCAD, WHICH HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH USDAO, IF NO OBJECTION
PERCEIVED.

2. ALTHOUGH USG HAS NO RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN PNG, SIL IS
KNOWN TO EMBASSY AND CONSULATE BRISBANE. IT IS ONE OF LARGER
PROTESTANT MISSIONARY GROUPS IN PNG TRANSLATING BIBLE INTO THE
MANY LANGUAGES OF REMOTE TRIBAL GROUPS. SIL OPERATES RELATIVELY
EXTENSIVE, FOR PNG, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES FOR
ITS LIGHT AIRCRAFT AT UKARUMPA IN EASTERN HIGHLANDS. TO OUR
KNOWLEDGE, SIL NOW OPERATES NO HELICOPTERS AND HAS NO
REHABILITATION OR MAINTENANCE CAPABILITY SPECIFICALLY FOR OH-23 G.
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NEAREST FAIRCHILD- HILLER FACILITY IS APPROXIMATELY ONE THOUSAND MILES AWAY IN QUEENSLAND. SIL CONCEIVABLY DOES HAVE LEGITIMATE NEED FOR ONE OR TWO SUCH SMALL HELICOPTERS BUT ITS CAPABILITY TO REHABILITATE, USE AND MAINTAIN A FLEET OF SIX IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL.

3. POLITICAL IMPACT OF SINGLE AMERICAN MISSIONARY GROUP OUT OF SEVERAL AMERICAN RELIGIOUS GROUPS REPRESENTED IN PNG BEING GIVEN ANY USG EXCESS PROPERTY HELICOPTERS MERITS CAREFUL AND CAUTIOUS CONSIDERATION. MISSIONARY GROUPS, WHICH TEND TO BE SOMEWHAT JEALOUS OF ONE ANOTHER, AND WHICH OPERATE THEIR OWN AIR SERVICES, HAVE IN PAST ENGAGED IN CONTROVERSIAL COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS OF THEIR AIRCRAFT AND OTHER FACILITIES IN COMPETITION WITH BUSINESS INTERESTS.

4. IN LIGHT THESE FACTORS, EMBASSY UNABLE MAKE CERTIFICATIONS REQUESTED REFTEL. BRISBANE CONSUL EXPECTS TO VISIT PNG EARLY IN FY 1974 AND COULD LOOK INTO MATTER THEN. HOWEVER, IF MATTER URGENT, EMBASSY PREPARED TO APPROACH DEPARTMENT EXTERNAL TERRITORIES IN CANBERRA RE PROPOSED TRANSFER. PLEASE ADVISE EMBASSY IF THIS DESIRED. MEANWHILE, EMBASSY REQUESTS DEPARTMENT INFORM NCAD THAT PROPOSED TRANSFER SHOULD NOT BE APPROVED WITHOUT DEPARTMENT'S CONCURRENCE.
RICE

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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